

(e) For most purposes, a document or other record may usefully be treated as a single unit of *information*, even though in fact the document or record is comprised of a collection of individual items of information. However, in applying the provisions of this subpart, it will often be necessary to separate the individual items of information into two or more categories, and to afford different treatment to the information in each such category. The need for differentiation of this type may arise, e.g., because a business confidentiality claim covers only a portion of a record, or because only a portion of the record is eligible for confidential treatment. EPA offices taking action under this subpart must be alert to this problem.

(f) In taking actions under this subpart, EPA offices should consider whether it is possible to obtain the affected business's consent to disclosure of useful portions of records while protecting the information which is or may be entitled to confidentiality (e.g., by withholding such portions of a record as would identify a business, or by disclosing data in the form of industry-wide aggregates, multi-year averages or totals, or some similar form).

(g) This subpart does not apply to questions concerning entitlement to confidential treatment or information which concerns an individual solely in his personal, as opposed to business, capacity.

[41 FR 36902, Sept. 1, 1976, as amended at 43 FR 40000, Sept. 8, 1978; 50 FR 51661, Dec. 18, 1985]

§ 2.203 Notice to be included in EPA requests, demands, and forms; method of asserting business confidentiality claim; effect of failure to assert claim at time of submission.

(a) *Notice to be included in certain requests and demands for information, and in certain forms.* Whenever an EPA office makes a written request or demand that a business furnish information which, in the office's opinion, is likely to be regarded by the business as entitled to confidential treatment under this subpart, or whenever an EPA office prescribes a form for use by businesses in furnishing such information,

the request, demand, or form shall include or enclose a notice which—

(1) States that the business may, if it desires, assert a business confidentiality claim covering part or all of the information, in the manner described by paragraph (b) of this section, and that information covered by such a claim will be disclosed by EPA only to the extent, and by means of the procedures, set forth in this subpart;

(2) States that if no such claim accompanies the information when it is received by EPA, it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the business; and

(3) Furnishes a citation of the location of this subpart in the Code of Federal Regulations and the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(b) *Method and time of asserting business confidentiality claim.* A business which is submitting information to EPA may assert a business confidentiality claim covering the information by placing on (or attaching to) the information, at the time it is submitted to EPA, a cover sheet, stamped or typed legend, or other suitable form of notice employing language such as *trade secret, proprietary, or company confidential*. Allegedly confidential portions of otherwise non-confidential documents should be clearly identified by the business, and may be submitted separately to facilitate identification and handling by EPA. If the business desires confidential treatment only until a certain date or until the occurrence of a certain event, the notice should so state.

(c) *Effect of failure to assert claim at time of submission of information.* If information was submitted by a business to EPA on or after October 1, 1976, in response to an EPA request or demand (or on an EPA-prescribed form) which contained the substance of the notice required by paragraph (a) of this section, and if no business confidentiality claim accompanied the information when it was received by EPA, the inquiry to the business normally required by § 2.204(c)(2) need not be made. If a claim covering the information is received after the information itself is received, EPA will make such efforts as are administratively practicable to associate the late claim with copies of

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the previously-submitted information in EPA files (see § 2.204(c)(1)). However, EPA cannot assure that such efforts will be effective, in light of the possibility of prior disclosure or widespread prior dissemination of the information.

§ 2.204 Initial action by EPA office.

(a) *Situations requiring action.* This section prescribes procedures to be used by EPA offices in making initial determinations of whether business information is entitled to confidential treatment for reasons of business confidentiality. Action shall be taken under this section whenever an EPA office:

(1) Learns that it is responsible for responding to a request under 5 U.S.C. 552 for the release of business information; in such a case, the office shall issue an initial determination within the period specified in § 2.112;

(2) Desires to determine whether business information in its possession is entitled to confidential treatment, even though no request for release of the information has been received; or

(3) Determines that it is likely that EPA eventually will be requested to disclose the information at some future date and thus will have to determine whether the information is entitled to confidential treatment. In such a case this section's procedures should be initiated at the earliest practicable time, in order to increase the time available for preparation and submission of comments and for issuance of determinations, and to make easier the task of meeting response deadlines if a request for release of the information is later received under 5 U.S.C. 552.

(b) *Previous confidentiality determination.* The EPA office shall first ascertain whether there has been a previous determination, issued by a Federal court or by an EPA legal office acting under this subpart, holding that the information in question is entitled to confidential treatment for reasons of business confidentiality.

(1) If such a determination holds that the information is entitled to confidential treatment, the EPA Office shall furnish any person whose request for the information is pending under 5 U.S.C. 552 an initial determination (see § 2.111 and § 2.113) that the information

has previously been determined to be entitled to confidential treatment, and that the request is therefore denied. The office shall furnish such person the appropriate case citation or EPA determination. If the EPA office believes that a previous determination which was issued by an EPA legal office may be improper or no longer valid, the office shall so inform the EPA legal office, which shall consider taking action under § 2.205(h).

(2) With respect to all information not known to be covered by such a previous determination, the EPA office shall take action under paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) *Determining existence of business confidentiality claims.* (1) Whenever action under this paragraph is required by paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the EPA office shall examine the information and the office's records to determine which businesses, if any, are affected businesses (see § 2.201(d)), and to determine which businesses if any, have asserted business confidentiality claims which remain applicable to the information. If any business is found to have asserted an applicable claim, the office shall take action under paragraph (d) of this section with respect to each such claim.

(2)(i) If the examination conducted under paragraph (c)(1) of this section discloses the existence of any business which, although it has not asserted a claim, might be expected to assert a claim if it knew EPA proposed to disclose the information, the EPA office shall contact a responsible official of each such business to learn whether the business asserts a claim covering the information. However, no such inquiry need be made to any business—

(A) Which failed to assert a claim covering the information when responding to an EPA request or demand, or supplying information on an EPA form, which contained the substance of the statements prescribed by § 2.203(a);

(B) Which otherwise failed to assert a claim covering the information after being informed by EPA that such failure could result in disclosure of the information to the public; or

(C) Which has otherwise waived or withdrawn a claim covering the information.